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Grace

This was used at the Mid Thames Founder's Day, October 2010.

written by the Rt Revd G.E. Reindorp and printed by kind permission of The Women's Institute. This was used at the Mid Thames Founder's Day, October 2010.

Christ in the wilderness, five thousand fed;
Two small fishes and five loaves of bread,
May the blessing of him who made the division,
Rest upon us and upon our provision.

At the Gate

Written by a soldier serving in Afghanistan



The soldier stood and faced his God
Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining
Just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now you soldier
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
To my church been true?"

The soldier squared his shoulders and said
"No Lord I guess I ain't
But those of us who carry guns
Cannot be a saint

I've had to work most Sundays
And at times my talk is tough
And sometimes I've been violent
Because the world is awfully rough

But I never took a penny
That wasn't mine to keep
Though I've worked a lot of overtime
When bills just got too steep

And I never passed a cry for help
Though at times I shook with fear
And sometimes God forgive me
I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place
Among these people here

They never wanted me around
Except to calm their fears

If you've a place here, Lord
It needn't be so grand
I never expected or had too much
But if you don't I'll understand"

There was a silence all around the throne
Where saints had often trod
As the soldier waited quietly
For the judgment of his God

"Step forward now you soldier
You've borne your burdens well
Walk peacefully in Heaven's streets
You've done your time in Hell"

Celtic Blessing

May the road rise to meet you

May the wind always be at your back

May the sun shine upon your face

May the rain fall soft upon your fields and gardens until we meet again

May we all be held safe in the hollow of God's hand

Circle me

Circle me, Lord.
Keep protection near and danger afar.
Circle me, Lord.
Keep hope within, keep doubt without.
Circle me, Lord.
Keep light near and darkness afar.
Circle me, Lord.
Keep peace within, keep evil out.
Amen



Crabby Old Man

What do you see nurses?What do you see?

What are you thinking.....when you're looking at me?

A crabby old man,not very wise,

Uncertain of habitwith faraway eyes?

Who dribbles his food.....and makes no reply.
When you say in a loud voice....."I do wish you'd try!"
Who seems not to noticethe things that you do.
And forever is losing A sock or shoe?

Who, resisting or not.....lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding the long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse.....you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding,as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of ten.....with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisterswho love one another.

A young boy of sixteenwith wings on his feet
Dreaming that soon nowa lover he'll meet.
A groom soon at twentymy heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vows.....that I promised to keep.

At twenty-five, now I have young of my own,
Who need me to guide and a secure happy home.
A man of thirty my young now grown fast,
Bound to each other with ties that should last.

At forty, my young sonshave grown and are gone,
But my woman's beside me.....to see I don't mourn.
At fifty, once more babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children my loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me my wife is now dead.
I look at the futureI shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearingyoung of their own.
And I think of the years..... and the love that I've known.

I'm now an old man.....and nature is cruel.
'Tis jest to make old agelook like a fool.
The body, it crumbles.....grace and vigor, depart.
There is now a stone.....where I once had a heart.

But inside this old carcass a young guy still dwells,
And now and againmy battered heart swells.
I remember the joys..... I remember the pain.
And I'm loving and living.....life over again.

I think of the years ...all too few.....gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact.....that nothing can last.
So open your eyes, peopleopen and see..
Not a crabby old man. Look closer....see.....ME!!

Founders Meeting 2014 Reflective Readings

Ezekiel Chapter 47 v1-12

The River From the Temple

47 The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. ² He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.

³ As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubit and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. ⁴ He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. ⁵ He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. ⁶ He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷ When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. ⁸ He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. ⁹ Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. ¹⁰ Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. ¹¹ But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. ¹² Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

Prayer is like watching for the Kingfisher, a poem by Ann Lewin

Prayer is like watching for the Kingfisher.
All you can do is be where he is likely to appear, and wait.
Often, nothing much happens,
There is space, silence and expectancy.
No visible sign, only the knowledge that he's been there.
And may come again.
Seeing or not seeing cease to matter,
You have been prepared.
But sometimes, when you've almost stopped expecting it,
A flash of brightness
Gives encouragement.

Founders Meeting 2013 Prayers

PRAYERS AND MEDITATION FOR FOUNDERS MEETING 16 MAY 2013

Shortly we will be starting our journeys home and back to the busy world so may we take a few moments now to reflect on the time we have spent together in friendship and fellowship:

“TAKE TIME”

Take time to work, it is the price of success.
Take time to think, it is the source of power.
Take time to play, it is secret of perpetual youth.
Take time to read, it is foundation of wisdom.
Take time to worship, it is the highway to the Kingdom of God
Take time to be friendly, it is the road to happiness.
Take time to dream, it is hitching your wagon to a star.
Take time to love and be loved, it is the privilege of life,
Take time to look around, it is too short a day to be selfish.
Take time to laugh, it is the music of the soul.



MEDITATION

"TIME OUT"

Here is an ancient Scripture with a modern message: As they were going down to the City, Samuel said to Saul "stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God". Today we are told that in order to succeed we must hit the floor running at a hundred miles an hour and keep it up until we collapse at night. And what's the downside to all this? Our walk with the Lord slows to a crawl, or stops altogether. Our busy lives lead to spiritual emptiness. Being part of the chase can be exciting and rewarding, but leaves little or no time for God.

If this applies to you you need to say "TIME OUT". Refuse to put your spiritual life on autopilot, mouthing meaningless prayers and leafing through a Bible neither studying it nor living by it. Be prepared to pay the price it takes to walk with God. Doing this will not be easy but it is the only way to be at peace with God and be in a position to hear what he is saying to us. Nobody ever said the Christian walk is easy, but is anything in the world of more lasting importance or more rewarding?

LET US PRAY

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of our land as you would make it; a land where the weak are protected and none go hungry or are poor; a land where the benefits of a civilised life are shared. A land where peace is built with justice and justice is guided by love. Give us the inspiration and courage to build it through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

Lord, we pray and thank you for this wonderful day and as we travel home tonight, watch over us and TAKE us safely back to our loved ones. Lord, continue to bless us and our families this night and always in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

from "Be Still and Know"

The ancient Assyrians used the same word for prayer as for the act of unclenching a fist. If we think how often in a day we have our fist clenched we begin to see the importance of this image of prayer. The clenched fist can represent so much of the human spirit - highhandedness, pride, threatening behaviour, possessiveness, control. Prayer, however, in the spirit of Christ who prayed for his Father's will to be done, is a renouncing of such attitudes. As the soul awakens so the fists unfold. To open our hands to God is to reject violence, pride and a belief in our self-sufficiency. Open hands form an invitation to the future to take shape as the will of God directs.

Michael Ramsey (1904-1988) from Be Still and Know



From Psalm 23

A Thought From Japan

Based on the 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my pace setter... I shall not rush
He makes me to stop for quiet intervals.
He provides me with images of stillness
which restores my serenity.
He leads me in the ways of efficiency
through calmness of mind and his guidance is peace.



Even though I have a great many things
to accomplish each day, I will not fret:
For his presence is here.
His timelessness, his all importance will
keep me in balance.

He prepares refreshment and renewal in
the midst of my activity by anointing my

mind with oils of tranquillity.
My cup of joyous energy overflows.

True harmony and effectiveness shall be
the fruits of my hours for I shall walk in
the pace of my Lord and dwell in his house for ever.

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Henley Grace

This Grace was said by Canon Martin Griffiths at the 2009 Founders' Day.

'For well-filled plate and brimming cup
and freedom from the washing-up,
we thank you, Lord. Amen.'



Intercessions from Founders' Meeting June 2012

Loving Father

We remember today the Founders of our Fellowship and give thanks that it continues to give its members a community of faith and friendship. May we give thanks for every act of kindness and compassion and may we learn to grow in generosity of spirit. May we continue to support one another through the troubles and chances of life and rejoice in the thoughtfulness, consideration, trust and the many wonderful shared experiences we have together. In all our tomorrows may we use the time left to us here as good stewards of God's gifts. We thank those who work tirelessly to ensure there is a Tomorrow for the Fellowship. Help us to care enough to make a difference, so that when we think there is nothing we can do, we remember what we can achieve with prayer and faith.

Father through your unfailing love

All: Help us to transform Our Tomorrow

Loving Father,

Precious lives were lost in the Falklands, and continue to be lost in conflicts elsewhere today: the ultimate sacrifice being paid to ensure a better tomorrow. As Jesus said, 'No one has greater love than this'. But so often when we consider our tomorrow, it is for ourselves, our family, our country, and is measured socially, materially or politically. Forgive us Father. We know you love us unconditionally and yet we so often fail to ask what you want for the tomorrow of your people, in your world. You gave your Son to die for us and to rise again, offering us the chance of forgiveness and a new way of living. Jesus said, 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples'. To us then, falls the opportunity of being the channels through which your love can flow to others so that life can be better tomorrow. We don't know what our tomorrow will bring but always remind us that even one loving action today can bear rich fruit tomorrow.

Father through your unfailing love

All: Help us to transform Our Tomorrow

Loving Father,

Your Son promised us renewal and new life at any age. By your power we are created and by your love we are redeemed. Grant that we may live renewed lives in fellowship with each other and in your service. Make us into the people you want us to be, and forgive us when we fall short. Teach us to be generous in judgement, bold in commitment, and sensitive in listening. Where we find no love, let us bring love, and make us more like you. Our hopes and struggles, sorrows and fears are already known to you. We pray for the strength to deal with them and the determination to focus on what is of lasting value. Let us not take one another for granted, but wake each morning ready to notice the Christ in each person we see or speak to. We thank you for all our blessings and pray that we may take none of them for granted, but commit ourselves to live out our thanks each day.

Father through your unfailing love

All: Help us to transform Our Tomorrow

Loving Father,

We thank you for our yesterdays, help us to learn from them: give us the courage to stand up for what is right, so creating a fairer world tomorrow. Difficult choices have to be made and we pray for those in authority, that they may be given humility and discernment in their decision making, aware that the action of a single moment can have long lasting repercussions on those with no voice to change the way of the world. we pray particularly for the Church and those organisations seeking to bring your love and compassion to those places where lives are at risk through poverty, disaster or disease, or because political authority is dependent on intimidation and fear.

We think particularly of those struggling for democracy in the Middle East, especially Syria. Turn those whose hearts and minds are consumed with hatred towards your way of love. We remember particularly today the great human cost of the war in Afghanistan, the

sacrifices and the bravery of our forces and that of all the personnel behind the front lines who support them....as we pray for a peaceful resolution to the situation there.

We bring before you all those grappling with the global financial problems that impact worldwide on the work and well being of so many, many people. Give them vision and sensitivity in their dealings so that in the words of St Benedict 'the strong may have something to strive for and the weak may not be overburdened'.

Father through your unfailing love

All: Help us to transform Our Tomorrow

Loving Father

We remember today the 900 people who died in the Falklands War of 1982. In spite of the 30 years that have passed their sacrifice does not go unremembered. We pray especially for those relatives of members of the Wives Fellowship who lost their lives in the Falklands and also for the bereaved families of all wars. We give thanks to those whose have done so much to ensure a better tomorrow in many parts of the world. Lord, bring healing to all who are wounded by conflict, whether physically or emotionally, and give them the assurance of your presence.

We pray for all those who have come to the end of their earthly life and today we especially remember all those members of our Fellowship who have died in the last year and whose names are listed in Grapevine. We also remember We remember too those members who unexpectedly could not be with us today and any others known to us. Give Comfort to the bereaved and everlasting peace to all who rest in your love. Bring your reassurance and healing, your hope and patience to all who are suffering in any way. Bless them in their need and surround them with your love. As we walk our own paths towards heaven

Father through your unfailing love

All: Help us to transform Our Tomorrow

Loving Father,

We thank you for Elizabeth, our Queen, for her steadfast commitment to her Coronation vows through sixty years of sovereignty and selfless service to these lands and the Commonwealth, showing fairness and mercy in her leadership and keeping your commandments. Jesus said 'the one who rules is the one who serves.' Trusting in you she has dedicated herself to her people and given us stability in a changing world. Bless this nation and grant Elizabeth love, joy and peace as she continues in your service, uplifted by the outpouring of affection and gratitude of this Diamond Jubilee celebration. Loving Father, we ask you to remain rooted in us, so that we also may bear fruit as we seek to serve our Brothers and Sisters. And when we feel inadequate for the task, remind us that the woods would be silent if no birds sang except the ones who sing the best. In the words of St Teresa, Christ has no body now on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes through which we must see the world with Christ's compassion. Ours are the feet with

which He is to go about doing good. Ours are the hands with which He is to bless others now. So give us the vision, strength and discernment to create your world in our tomorrow.

Intercessions conclude with:

Leader: Merciful Father

**All: Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our
Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Life's ultimate task

(A prayer-reflection)

What is life's most important task?

To grow old with a cheerful heart,

to be still, even when I would like
to be active,

to be silent, when I would like to
talk,

to have hope even times of frustration;

to carry my cross in humility and serenity of heart,

to put aside envy even when I see younger people

walking God's path full of health and energy,

to humbly accept help from others

when it is I who would rather give help.

So, when I can no longer be useful

for others because of frailty,

I need, gently and humbly,

to accept the heavy burden of old age as



A GIFT FROM GOD.

I have a heart that has been in use a long time,
and now God is giving it a final polishing
so that I can return to my true home
all bright and shiny.

To gradually release myself from
the chains that bind me to this world,
is indeed a wonderful work.

When I can no longer do things, let me accept
this restriction with humility.

However, for my closing years,
God has kept for me
the most important work of all, and that is....

PRAYER.

Even if I can no longer do anything else with my hands,
right to the very end I can still join those hands in prayer.

I can pray, asking God to bless all those I love.

As I approach my death,
may I hear God's voice when he says,

"COME! YOU ARE MY FRIEND
I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU".

*From **Autumn of Life** (1973) by Fr Hermann Heuvers SJ, translated from Japanese by Fr Barry Cairns*

Medley

Lord, I am troubled...

I am anxious and distressed

for myself...

for others...

and especially about....

Help me to trust your love, for
you to carry my sorrows.

Teach me to act and speak in the
way you want.

Give me the wisdom to know
when not to interfere.

Calm my fears, for all things are in your hands.



Lord, I pray for...

My family and friends.

My neighbours at home, at work, for the ones I like and dislike,

for those who are ill, for those who mourn, for the oppressed, for those in disaster or war.

Bless them Father, in their various troubles and show me how I may help.

Lord, thank you for your presence here,

for the opportunity to pray,

for the promise of peace,

for the beauty of the world,

the kindness of people, for all those I love, and especially for

for the Cross of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Help me to show my gratitude in deeds as well as words.

Lord, I am sorry for the times when I have been hasty or unkind,

thought or acted selfishly, failed to forgive or ask forgiveness,

forgotten your presence, taken your love for granted.

I thank you for your promise to forgive all those who turn back to you in penitence.

O heavenly Father, your will for me and for all people is eternal happiness.

I thank you for the blessings you have given me and ask for strength to walk where you lead me.

Help me to remember the love of Jesus shown on the Cross

and to accept the new life and love and freedom which He offers.

Amen

More Short Prayers

You will not be able to carry
another's burdens unless
you first lay down your
own.

Unburden yourself first to
carry another's.

Lord Jesus



Christ,
may the shepherds of your Church
watch over the flock of your faithful worthily,
so that they may successfully reach you
who are the Easter of all the saints
and blessed through all the ages.

From the sermons of St Anthony (c.251-356)

The seed is Christ's, the harvest his:

may we be stored within God's barn.

The sea is Christ's, the fish are his:

may we be caught within God's net.

From birth to age, from age to death,
enfold us, Christ, within your arms.

Until the end, the great re-birth,
Christ, be our joy in Paradise.

Trad. Irish, tr. James Quinn

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lacked anything.
'A guest', I answered, 'worthy to be here.'
Love said, 'You shall be he'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee.'
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I?'
'Truth, Lord, but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not', says Love, 'who bore the blame?'
'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down', says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
So I did sit and eat.

George Herbert 1593-1633

Pilgrimage of Life

Christ our Guide,
stay with us on our pilgrimage through life:
When we falter, encourage us,
when we stumble, steady us,
and when we have fallen, pick us up.
Help us to become, step by step, more truly ourselves,
and remind us that you have travelled this way before us.

Amen.
Angela Ashwin

Prayers chosen by Bristol III

Prayers chosen by Bristol III

*Almighty God, in whom we live and
move and have our being, you have
made us for yourself so our hearts are
restless until they rest in you. Grant us
purity of heart and strength of purpose,
that no selfish person may hinder us
from knowing your will or no weakness
in doing it; but that in your light we may
see light and in your service find perfect
freedom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Augustine of Hippo*

*This day you gave us Lord
Will never come again.
Tomorrow has still yet to come
Yesterday has been and gone
But still your love goes on and on.*

*Most gracious Lord, we thank you for
the gift of friendship and for all
those with whom our lives are joined in
true affection.*

*Teach us to value our friends and to
regard each one as a gift and token of
your love.*

*Make us ready to extend friendship to
others and to remember the
housebound, the lonely and those who
need a friend's helping hand; for Jesus
Christ's sake. Amen.*

Father God

*Thank you for the richness of our
friendships within this fellowship.*

*Thank you that you planned, and see, the Big Picture;
each of us different & individual, like
pieces of a jigsaw - not by chance, but
made that way by You, intentionally.
Drawn together by Your prompting to
complement & enrich each other's lives,
to link together & play our part in Your plan.*

*We want to be there for each other
in good times & bad
in the laughter & the tears.
Tune us in to Your Holy Spirit's nudges,
Show us how best to support & serve
each other as we journey on.
Help us to keep you at the centre of our
lives so we can be channels of Your
kindness & compassion
and reflectors of Your love.*

Give us O God:

Thoughts which turn into prayer,

Prayer which turns into love,

Love which turns into deeds.

Amen

*I asked for peace, You offered Your presence
I asked for hope, You came to my side.
I asked for joy
You lit my journey.
I asked for love, You gave me Yourself.
David Adams from a service at the
quayside, Keyhaven, July 29 2007*

*Hold my hand, Lord.
Walk me through the loneliness
And the valley of my sorrow.
Hold onto me when I'm afraid
To think about tomorrow.
Let me lean on you, Lord,*

When I'm too weary to go on.

Hold my hand, Lord,

*Through the night
Until I see the light of dawn.*

*Heavenly Father, in our journey
through life teach us to look back
with gratitude and count our blessings;
to look around with compassion and
serve those in need; to look forward with
confidence and trust you for all that's to
come; in the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

I asked JESUS

'How much do You love me?'

*'This much,' He answered, and
He*

stretched out his arms and died.



Prayers Chosen by Rugby I and II

Do all the good you can

*by all the means you can
in all the ways you can
at all the times you can
to all the people you can
as long as ever you can*

*Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:*

*grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

*Lord help us to enjoy the common things of our everyday lives.
We sometimes find ourselves saying that nothing happened today,
when in fact the ordinary events of our lives make a rich pattern,
but they are so familiar we hardly notice them:
things like cups of tea and coffee and meals shared with friends and colleagues;
or listening to favourite family stories that we have heard and told so often.
Lord of Life, help us to recognise the joy of simple things.*

From St. John's Gospel

*Lord,
you who are the light of men,
fill me with light,
lighten my path
that I might not stumble.
Shine on the complex shadows
of my pride, passions and self-interest
that they may fade
in the brightness of love.
Throughout the hours of this day
when anger and dissension cloud the horizon*

*may I see the light of reconciliation.
In the gloom of doubt
may there be a spark of hope,
and may your wisdom, peace and joy
be the light which lightens every day.*

*I asked for peace, You offered Your presence.
I asked for hope, You came to my side.
I asked for joy, You lit my journey.
I asked for love, You gave me Yourself.
David Adam*

God's Sustaining Grace
*Thy Love enfolds me,
Thy Power upholds me,
and Thy Wisdom guides me.*

*Thy presence, O Lord of Light
and Love and Power Divine,
is always with me, and Thy
Spirit goeth before me
preparing my way. Because
Thou art nearer than
breathing I am able to
commune with Thee at all
times and at any moment.*

*When everybody and
everything fail, -
still God remains.*

Glory be to God the Father whose love is over us.
*Glory be to Jesus whose love shares our human lives.
Glory be to the Holy Spirit alive and powerful as love within us.
To the One God, eternally love, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.*

Gaelic blessing

*May the strength of God pilot us,
and the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us,
and the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the Shield of God defend us.*

Prayers for use at Committee Meetings

Heavenly Father, as we meet in your name, we thank you for this day and for bringing us together. We thank you to for all your generosity to us -for our families, our friends and for our Fellowship and all that it means to us, for love that is shared and for care that is given. Amen

A prayer by Maria Hare

O Lord, this is our desire: to walk along the path of life that you have appointed us, in steadfastness of faith, in lowliness of heart, in gentleness of love. May not the cares or duties of this life press on us too heavily; but lighten our burdens, that we may follow your way in quietness, filled with thankfulness for your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



A prayer by Christina Rossetti

O Lord, whose way is perfect: help us, we pray, always to trust in your goodness; that walking with you in faith, and following you in all simplicity, we may possess quiet and contented minds, and cast all our care on you, because you care for us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

A prayer for our meeting, thinking about the power of God and the love of God working through us

When we sit down in committee O Lord remind us that it's not talk but power, not endless analysis but action plans we need. Not the will of the eloquent but your will be done. Be with us we pray in all our deliberations and bring us to decisions which honour your name.

This we ask in Jesus' name Amen

O Lord this new day is your gift to us;
Let us accept it with eagerness and use it well;
Grant that every word we speak may be fit for you to hear;

That every plan we make may be fit for you to bless;
That every deed we do may be fit for you to share.

Keep us courageous if things should prove exacting;
Keep us cheerful if things should prove dull;
Keep us unruffled if the unexpected should occur;

Written by Jane Count, 2010

Promises

God hath not promised skies
always blue, flower strewn
pathways all one's life through.

God hath not promised sun
without rain, joy without sorrow,
peace without pain.

But God hath promised strength
for the day, rest for the labour,
light for the way,

grace for the trials, help from
above, unfailing sympathy and
undying love.



Amen

Relationship

The joy of such a pattern is not only the joy
of creation or the joy of participation, it is also
the joy of the moment. Lightness of touch and
living in the moment are intertwined. One
cannot dance well unless one is completely in
time with the music.... Perfect poise on the
beat is what gives dancing its sense of ease, of
timelessness.....of the eternal. The dancers who
are perfectly in time never destroy 'the winged
life' in each other or in themselves.



Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Robert Frost

The Road not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost (1874-1963)



A Prayer in Spring

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers today;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,

Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

And make us happy in the darting bird
That suddenly above the bees is heard,
The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid air stands still.

For this is love and nothing else is love,
To which it is reserved for God above
To sanctify to what far ends he will,
But which it only needs that we fulfill.

Some Prayers used at a Regional Day

Written and said by Rosamond Mathew and Alice Nolda

Lord, we give thanks for the organisation that we have inherited, for its ethos of comradeship and true values in marriage and in life. Grant us the grace to keep the faith with those who went before, and, by our example, so to influence those who are to come that we move forward into the future with optimism and in harmony. May God, our Father, bless us in our ways and keep us in the knowledge of his love, now and forever.

Lord, we pray that we who are enjoying, or have enjoyed, the blessings of marriage, look kindly on any whose vision may be faltering, and will reach out to offer them the understanding and support they need to strengthen their purpose and enable them to fulfil their vows.

Lord, at this time of our Ruby anniversary with the Fellowship, we remember that the Bible states that a virtuous woman is one whose price is "far above rubies". This is a high standard to aspire to, but with your help and guidance we are confident that it can be achieved, whilst keeping "the common touch". Help us to play our part in continuing to uphold the fabric of a loving and balanced relationship which brings encouragement and joy to all its members.



A Prayer for Mothers: Loving Father, we pray for all who have the privilege and responsibility of raising children. Make them conscious of the task entrusted to them to enable each child to grow in mind, body and spirit. Help them to show patience and understanding when there are differences, to look forward not back, to comfort and cherish, and through all the highs and lows to know the joy and companionship of motherhood.

A Prayer for young women: As we look to the future of our Fellowship let us pray for those who will be joining it in the years to come. Heavenly Father, we pray for all young women, who face many great pressures at work and in their homes. Teach them to look beyond self and to honour and cherish the commitment of marriage and to rejoice in sharing life and love.

A Prayer for those less fortunate than ourselves: O Lord, who has given us the blessings of love and support of our families and friends, a sufficiency of worldly goods to keep us in comfort, a place of tranquillity and beauty in which to pass our days. And health to enjoy all these, let us not be so occupied with our own small problems that we forget to seek out those less fortunate than ourselves and offer them our friendship and help and understanding in all their difficulties. So may we do your will on earth.

These Prayers were used at the Bury St Edmunds 40th Anniversary Regional Day

Some Short Prayers

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are
restless
till they find their rest in you.
Teach us to offer ourselves in love and service
to one another and to you;
that here we may have your peace,
and in the world to come life everlasting.
St. Augustine (354-430)



Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing dismay you,
All things pass:
God never changes.
Patience attains
All that it strives for.
Those who have God
Find they lack nothing.
God alone suffices.
St. Teresa of Avila (1515-82)

Unless the eye catch fire
The God will not be seen.
Unless the ear catch fire
The God will not be heard.
Unless the tongue catch fire
The God will not be named.
Unless the heart catch fire
The God will not be loved.
Unless the mind catch fire
The God will not be known

Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)



Glory be to God for dappled things --
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced - fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.
Gerard Manley Hopkins(1844-1889)

Thanksgiving

For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food,
For love and friends,

For everything Thy goodness sends.

Thanksgiving - Ralph Waldo Emerson - 1803-1882

The Brick

The bricklayer laid a brick on a bed of cement. Then, with a precise stroke of his trowel spread another layer, and without a by-your-leave, laid on another brick. The foundations grew visibly. The building rose, tall and strong, to shelter people.

I thought, Lord, of that brick buried in the darkness at the base of the big building. No one sees it, but it accomplishes its task, and the other bricks need it.



Lord, what difference whether I am on the rooftop or in the foundations of your building, as long as I stand faithfully at the right place?

Michael Quoist

The Carpenter's Tools

The carpenter's tools held a conference. Brother Hammer was in the chair. The meeting informed him that he must leave because he was too noisy. But he said 'If I am to leave the Carpenter's shop, Brother Gimlet must go too; he is so insignificant and makes very little impression.'

Little Brother Gimlet arose and said, 'All right but Brother Screw must go also; you have to turn him round and round and round to get him to go anywhere.'



Brother Screw then said, 'If you wish I will go, but Brother Plane must leave also; all his work is on the surface - there is no depth to it.'

To this Brother Plane replied, 'Well, Brother Rule will have to withdraw if I do for he is always measuring other folks as if he were the only one who is right.'

Brother Rule then complained against Brother Sandpaper and said, 'He is rougher than he ought to be and rubs people the wrong way.'

In the midst of the discussion the Carpenter of Nazareth walked in. He had come to perform his day's work. He put on his apron and went to the bench to make a pulpit. He employed the screw, the gimlet, the sandpaper, the saw, the hammer and all the other tools.

After the day's work was over and the pulpit was finished, Brother Saw arose and said, 'Brethren, I perceive that all of us are labourers together with God. There was not an accusation against any one of these tools that was not absolutely true, yet the Carpenter used every one.'

There was not a place where one could have been used instead of another. How careful we should be to guard against finding fault with any of God's tools.

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore.
Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:14

The Paradox of Life

The paradox of our time in history is
that we have taller buildings but

shorter tempers, wider freeways, but
narrower viewpoints. We spend
more, but

have less, we buy more, but enjoy
less. We have bigger houses and
smaller

families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less



sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems,
more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little,
drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too
little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too
much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a
living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've
been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street
to meet a new neighbour. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've
done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air, but
polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write
more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to
rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to
produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods, and slow digestion, big men and small
character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of
two incomes but more divorce; fancier houses, but broken homes. These are
days of quick trips, disposable nappies, throwaway morality, one night
stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to
quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and
nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to
you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just
hit 'delete'.

Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going
to be around forever. Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to
you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your
side. Remember to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is
the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a penny.

Remember to say "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but
most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from
deep inside you. Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for
one day that person will not be there again. Give time to love, give time to
speak, and give time to share the precious
thoughts in your mind.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths
we take, but by the moments that take our
breath away.



Those Men

Those men, should they think that we have forgotton,

Have faith that we have not,
That we remain altered by their alteration
Touched by a life lived from their own living
Sheltered by a world that could not give them rest in heavy weathers.

Those men hide now in each one of us
In some foreign part not of land, yet in
our blood
Giving life still from their painful death.
So that we now should not once forget,
Those men who fought and died for us.



Time

All men complain that
they haven't enough time.
They look at their lives from too human a point of view.
There is always time to do what God wants us to do,
but we must put ourselves completely into each moment that he offers us now.
I went out, Lord. Men were coming and going, walking and running.

Everything was rushing; cars, trucks, the street, the whole town.
Men were rushing not to waste time.
To catch up with time, to gain time.

Good bye, Sir, excuse me, I haven't time.
I'll come back, I can't wait, I haven't time.
I must end this letter - I haven't time.
I'd love to help you, but I haven't time.
I can't accept, having no time.
I can't think, I can't read, I'm swamped, I haven't time.
I'd like to pray, but I haven't time.

You understand, Lord, they simply haven't the time.
The child is playing, he hasn't time right now..later on...
The schoolboy has his homework to do, he hasn't time..later on...

The student had his courses, and so much work...later on...
The young man is at his sports, he hasn't time...later on...
The young married man has his new house; he has to fix it up, he hasn't time...later on..
The grandparents have their grandchildren, they haven't time... later on...
They are dying, they have no...
Too late!...They have no more time!

And so all men run after time, Lord.
They pass through life running - hurried, jostled, overburdened, frantic,
and they never get there. They haven't time.
In spite of all their efforts they're still short of time.
Of a great deal of time.
Lord, you must have made a mistake in your calculations.
There is a big mistake somewhere. The hours are too short, the days are too short.
Our lives are too short.

You who are beyond time, Lord, you smile to see us fighting it.
And you know what you are doing.
You make no mistakes in your distribution of time to men.
You give each one time to do what you want him to do.
But we must not lose time
waste time,
kill time,
For time is a gift that you give us,
But a perishable gift,
A gift that does not keep.

Lord, I have time,
I have plenty of time,
All the time that you give me,
The years of my life, the days of my years, the hours of my days.
They are all mine.
Mine to fill, quietly, calmly,
But to fill completely, up to the brim.
To offer them to you, that of their insipid water You may make a rich
wine as you made once in Galilee.

I am not asking you tonight, Lord, for time to do this and then that,
but your grace to do conscientiously, in the time that you give,
what you want me to do.

Michael Quoist

Translation of the Lord's Prayer

Translation of the Lord's Prayer

from King James to Gaian - Claudia I'Amoreaux

Great Spirit, Divine One, Creator
who is heaven earth rock wind
insect tree fox

human of every size shape color

Holy are your infinite names
chanted sung whispered
shouted in every language,
tongue.

We will midwife the rebirth of
Gaia
as best we can
restoring the Great Law of Peace.



Guide our hands to the soil and seed
honoring the alchemy of food.
Let us remember your abundance
and share the bread of life with any who hunger.

We are for giving
and giving and giving.
We trust in the give-away.
We give and receive.

Let us be humble before the darkness and the light
walking in harmony amidst them.
Give us courage to know them intimately
both within and without.

For you have breathed it all---
the behind, the above, the below, the beyond.
Your awesome power courses in our veins
and animates our hearts.
You are the Great Drum.

We thank you.